

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
January 9, 2025**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on January 9, 2025, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

ROLL CALL: Rikki Guthrie asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and Administrators were present or absent as noted:

Board Members Present:

Rikki A. Guthrie
Sandra J. Hillan
Frank Porras
Stuart B. Schultz
Bradley Keehn
Donald H. Rogers
Kayla Davis, HHS student representative
Isis Fleming, HHS student representative

Board Member Absent:

David Kostbade

Administrators Present

Peggy Buffington
Christopher N. King
William J. Longer
Jonathan Mock

Administrators Absent:

Bob Glover
Tim Krieg

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mrs. Guthrie indicated that the Board did not meet in executive session prior to the regular session.

CALL TO ORDER: Rikki Guthrie called the meeting to order around 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mrs. Guthrie led everyone present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

AUDIENCE: The following were present in the audience:

Josh Huddlestun, Mayor of the City of Hobart
Karen Robbins, former Board member
Carrie Keehn, wife of Brad Keehn and their children

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Frank Porras moved that the Board approve the regular session minutes of December 19, 2025. Seconded by Stuart Schultz. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: Mrs. Guthrie indicated there were no financial reports for the Board's consideration.

COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: Mrs. Guthrie asked for comments on the listed agenda items. There were none.

PERSONNEL: Jonathan Mock, Director of Human Resources and Compliance, indicated the Personnel Report and Personnel Report Addendum were included with the electronic meeting information for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Mock recommended approval and requested Board action.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board approve the Personnel Reports as presented. Seconded by Donald Rogers. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

Contracts for Extracurricular Services (Club Duties) –
Veterans School @ Mundell/August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025:
Kirsten Richter, Brainy Brickies 2, \$243.00
Dominique Shirey, Brainy Brickies 2, \$243.00
Sharon Castellanos, Brainy Brickies 2, \$243.00
Sharon Castellanos, Lego 2nd grade, \$162.00
Sharon Castellanos, Lego 3rd grade, \$162.00

Extracurricular Club Duty Contracts –

Joan Martin School/2024-2025 School Year:

Isiah Hayes, Cardio drumming, \$270.00

Isiah Hayes, Chess, \$1,080.00

Isiah Hayes, Drama, \$1,620.00

Isiah Hayes, Run Brickies Run, \$810.00

Isiah Hayes, Set Design Club, \$1,350.00

Veterans School @ Mundell/2024-2025 School Year:

Suzanne Tucker, Lego 2nd grade, \$162.00

Suzanne Tucker, Lego 3rd grade, \$162.00

Nicole Zybak, Lego 2nd grade, \$162.00

Nicole Zybak, Lego 3rd grade, \$162.00

Hobart Middle School/2024-2025 School Year:

Lindsay Foerg, Drama, \$2,619.00

Resignation –

Dennis Leonard, Service Center/Transportation Department, bus driver, effective January 6, 2025

New Employee –

Johanna Fryer, Service Center/Transportation, bus driver, effective January 6, 2025, \$21.14 per hour

Classified Staff – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate –

Judy Henry, Deputy Treasurer, adjust daily rate to \$184.63, effective January 13, 2025

Yvette Sutherland, Pre-Employment/Substitute Specialist: Adjust days worked to 260 and daily rate to \$184.63, effective January 13, 2025

Food Services Staff – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate –

Pay rate adjustments for the following employees who completed Serve Safe certification on October 21, 2024, effective November 3, 2024: Raychel Bridges, \$17.63 per hour; Amber Cabanas, \$13.67 per hour; Kathy Riley, \$14.25 per hour; and Kelly Ingram, \$13.67 per hour

Amber Cabanas, transferring to a different position, cook, at the high school, adjust pay rate to \$14.85 per hour and hours worked to 8, effective January 5, 2025

OATH OF OFFICE: Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed Mayor Josh Huddleston to the meeting and indicated that he agreed to administer the Oath of Office to Bradley Keehn and Frank Porras, who were elected to the Board of School Trustees in November. In addition, she mentioned that earlier today the Mayor administered the Oath of Office to David Kostbade at his home since he was unable to attend this evening’s meeting. She noted that in accordance with Indiana Code 5-4-1-1.2, the oath must be taken and deposited as required by section 4 of this chapter not later than thirty days after the beginning of the term of office and specifies filing with the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The Oath needed to be done and filed within the 30 days, or the office becomes vacant. The deadline for filing the Oath is noon on January 31st.

The Mayor administered the Oath’s of Office to Frank Porras and Bradley Keehn. Afterwards, Dr. Buffington indicated that Attorney William Longer agreed to file the Oaths of Office with the Lake County Clerk’s Office in Crown Point.

Dr. Buffington thanked the Mayor “for taking the time out of your day” to do this for us. He replied, “It was his honor.”

BOARD REORGANIZATION: Rikki Guthrie indicated that the Board needed to reorganize for the 2025 calendar year and needed to elect a president, vice-president, and secretary.

1. Nominations for President:

Rikki Guthrie opened the floor for nominations for President and said that after the new president was elected, they would continue with the Board reorganization.

Donald Rogers moved that Rikki Guthrie be nominated as President, and Frank Porras seconded.

There being no other nominations, President Guthrie closed the nominations and called for a vote on the motion. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

2. Nominations for Vice President:

President Guthrie opened the floor for nominations for Vice President.

Donald Rogers moved and Frank Porras seconded that Sandra Hillan be nominated to serve as Vice President of the Board.

There being no further nominations, Mrs. Guthrie closed the nominations and called for a vote the motion. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

3. Nominations for Secretary:

Rikki Guthrie, President, opened the floor for nominations for Secretary.

Donald Rogers nominated Frank Porras to serve as Secretary of the Board. Bradley Keehn seconded.

There being no other nominations, Rikki Guthrie, President, closed the nominations and called for a vote on the motion. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

4. Appointments of Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer:

Dr. Peggy Buffington recommended the reappointments of Mrs. Tracy Petruska Brumley and Mrs. Judy Henry to serve as Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer, respectively. She noted that Mrs. Brumley and Mrs. Henry were bonded employees.

Bradley Keehn moved that the Board appoint the Treasurer and Deputy Treasurer as recommended by the Superintendent. Stuart Schultz seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

5. Appointment of School Board Attorney:

President Rikki Guthrie indicated that the Board needed to appoint the School Board Attorney. She said that currently, William Longer serves as the Board's attorney. Per Board policy, the Board appoints a school attorney at their annual organizational meeting, and if they wish, the Board may set the retainer amount and additional costs for administrative and employee discipline and discharge proceedings and for litigation matters at this time. Dr. Buffington mentioned that she had provided information concerning the retainer and cost for additional services for administrative and employee discipline and discharge proceedings and for litigation for the last four years. She noted that the fee for 2025 remained the same as 2024 and mentioned that she probably would be coming back to the Board with a recommendation for an adjustment to the retainer after teacher negotiations were completed.

Stuart Schultz moved and Donald Rogers seconded that the Board appoint William Longer as the School Attorney, as presented. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

6. Establishment of Regular Meetings:

President Guthrie noted that the establishment of regular meetings in accordance with I.C. 20-5-3-2 establishes the parameters for regular, statutory and special meetings. The Board needed to reestablish the time and place of their regular meetings. Presently, meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays, 7:00 p.m. prevailing time in the Board Room at Hobart High School. Statutory meetings are set by statute or rule, and special meetings of the governing body shall be held on call by the Board President or the Superintendent of the school corporation.

President Guthrie requested Board action.

Bradley Keehn moved that the Board establish the parameters for regular, statutory and special meetings as follows: Meetings to be held on the first and third Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. prevailing time in the Board Room at Hobart High School, and special meetings of the governing body shall be held on call by the Board President or the Superintendent of the school corporation. Donald Rogers seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

7. Board Compensation:

Rikki Guthrie, President, indicated that the maximum levels of compensation are established in accordance with I.C. 20-26-4-7, at \$2,000.00. For school corporations that have adopted per diem rates for attendance at school board meetings, the maximum rates are \$150 for regular meetings,

which are those meetings established by board resolution, and \$75 for other meetings, such as special meetings, executive sessions, and committee meetings. She mentioned that currently, members of the Hobart Board of School Trustees receive \$2,000.00 plus \$100.00 for each regular session meeting attended. Board members do not receive per diem compensation for attending any other Board meetings, such as special meetings, executive sessions, or committee meetings.

President Guthrie requested Board action.

Donald Rogers moved that the Board establish Board Compensation as follows: \$2,000.00 plus \$100.00 for each regular session attended. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

8. Board of Finance:

President Guthrie, said that I.C. 5-13-7-6 required the Board of Finance to organize yearly after the first Monday and on or before the last day of January. The Board of Finance must conduct the following business at its annual meeting:

- Elect a president and secretary. Per Board policy, the Board of Finance is the same as the regular Board and the officers are the same. That should be acknowledged in the Board minutes for this meeting by motion and as outlined in Board policy.
- Review a written report that summarizes the investments made during the 2024 calendar year.
- Review the overall investment policy of the school corporation.
- Receive and review a written report on the financial condition of the school corporation. The Board of Finance will meet on January 23rd.

Mrs. Guthrie asked for Board action.

Bradley Keehn moved and Stuart Schultz seconded that per Board policy, the Board of Finance is the same as the regular Board and the officers are the same, and Board of Finance will convene a meeting on the January 23rd. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

PROCLAMATION: School Board Recognition Month: Superintendent Peggy Buffington read Proclamation No. 2025-1 aloud. The proclamation recognized the great job that our school board members are doing and proclaims the month of January as School Board Recognition Month. Dr. Buffington mentioned that she had been recognizing them with a proclamation for some time, and she did so to acknowledge their service as a Board. The Proclamation, as read, was included with the electronic meeting information, and is as follows:

School City of Hobart
Superintendent of Schools

Proclamation No. 2025-1
School Board Recognition Month

WHEREAS, an excellent public education system is vital to the quality of life for all citizens and communities; and

WHEREAS, local school board members are committed to children and believe that all children can be successful learners and that the best education is tailored to the individual needs of the child; and

WHEREAS, school board members work closely with parents, educational professionals and other community members to create the educational vision we want for our students; and

WHEREAS, school board members are responsible for building and maintaining the structure that provides a solid foundation for our school system; and

WHEREAS, school board members are strong advocates for public education and are responsible for communicating the needs of the school district to the public and the public's expectations to the district; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the public schools is to meet the diverse educational needs of all children and to empower them to become competent, productive contributors to a democratic society and an ever-changing world;

NOW, THEREFORE, I do hereby proclaim that the School City of Hobart proudly recognizes the dedication and hard work of its school board members and the month of January as School Board Recognition Month.

DATED this 9th day of January, 2025.

SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

Peggy Buffington, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Buffington told the Board members there were treats for them and told them to take one after the meeting. On behalf of the Board, Mrs. Guthrie thanked Dr. Buffington for the proclamation and apples.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE: President Rikki Guthrie noted that included with the electronic meeting information was a recap of Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Statements for 2025, and the 2025 Uniform Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements were for Frank Porras, Stuart Schultz, Peggy Buffington, and Kacey Allen. The recap information is as follows:

- Frank Porras's wife is an aide at Hobart Middle School.
- Stuart Schultz's wife is the assistant at the Media Resource Center.
- Peggy Buffington serves on the Board of Directors at St. Mary Medical Center.
- Kacey Allen's husband is a teacher at Veterans School.

President Rikki Guthrie requested Board action.

Donald Rogers moved and Bradley Keehn seconded that the Board accept the disclosure statements and direct the Superintendent file the documents with the State Board of Accounts and the Lake County Clerk. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Abstain – Schultz. Motion carried 5-0 with one abstention.

Dr. Buffington mentioned that she receives no compensation for serving on the Board of Directors at St. Mary Medical Center.

RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT: Legacy Foundation Donation from the Pope Family Fund: Superintendent Peggy Buffington recommended the acceptance of the \$3,000.00 donation from the Pope Family Fund for the enhancement and support of the music programs at the middle school and high school. To date the Pope Family Fund has donated \$12,157.00 plus \$1,500 received from a daughter and a grandson to the school district for a total of \$13,657.00. This was the second \$3,000.00 donation for this school year period.

Dr. Buffington noted Shirley M. Lankford Pope and Kenneth W. Pope were their parents and both graduated from Hobart High School, as did all five of the Pope children. Mr. Pope was especially involved in the band and played sax and clarinet during the big band era. He continued to play well into his 70's in Hobart's "Rusty Pipes" band. He passed away in August of 2002. She noted that their mom eventually married again to Bill Hahn, a Purdue graduate who was active in the glee club. They met in the church choir and lived in Hobart. Mrs. Hahn has since passed away. Dr. Buffington said Mrs. Hahn always enjoyed attending the senior citizen activities that were held at Hobart High School. In addition, Dr. Buffington had the opportunity to attend her 90th birthday that was held on Kentucky Derby Day, and that was the theme of her party. Wolfgang and the orchestra, also, celebrated her special day. She said the family runs marathons in recognition of their parents and always have on Brickie gear, and they send her pictures. She noted they are proud Brickies. Dr. Buffington expressed the school corporation's gratitude for the monetary donations in memory of Kenneth Pope and Shirley Pope Hahn.

Dr. Buffington requested board action.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board accept the donation from the Pope Family Fund, as presented. Frank Porras seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT: Indiana Department of Education Title I Grant: Dr. Peggy Buffington noted the school corporation had been awarded this year's IDOE Title I Basic Grant. Mrs. Lori Anderson, Director of Elementary Curriculum, prepared and submitted the grant. Dr. Buffington mentioned that she provided the free and reduced lunch data, and Business Manager Bob Glover furnished the per pupil expenditure for the grant's preparation. The grant award was for \$671,658.54. The award approval memorandum was included with the electronic meeting information. The amount awarded last year was \$680,918.32. These funds are used to provide interventions for elementary students. Dr. Buffington commented that the process of completing the grant has become much more complicated than it was years ago. There is more work on the front end to get preliminary approval before getting the basic grant's approval.

Dr. Buffington recommended accepting the grant and requested Board action.

Stuart Schultz moved that the Board accept Indiana Department of Education 2024-2025 Basic Title I Grant, as presented. Seconded by Sandra Hillan.

In the discussion, the Board thanked Lori Anderson for her work on the Title I grant.

Vote on motion: Aye – Rogers, Keehn, Schultz, Porras, Hillan, and Guthrie. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS: The Board received the following information:

- School Information – weekly agendas from all of the schools, except Joan Martin School, and two weeks of the BricksCenter newsletter.

COMMENTS: From the audience, Karen Robbins noted she was at the meeting in support of Brad Keehn and to “thank him for taking over.” In addition, she extended her congratulations to all the new officers.

From the administration, Dr. Buffington extended her congratulations to the new Board members and the returning member, and to the new officers. She noted it was “a new beginning for all of you,” and even though things have changed, the Board would continue to do “what you do with children” and would “continue making good choices for children.” She said school was back in session, and it was nice to have everyone back. Dr. Buffington mentioned that the website has been changed over with a new platform and has been “a little painful.” She also noted that a cybersecurity meeting was held that was the result of a recent audit, and she extended her appreciation to Russ Mellon for all of the work he did with the audit and the rest of the Technology Department for their continued hard work and the dedication. In addition, she said she would not survive without Chris King. She noted the insurance coverage for cybersecurity “has skyrocketed.” She said both directors work very hard as do all of the technicians. She was looking forward to second semester and having the students back. Chris King extended his congratulations to the new Board members. He told the student representatives to take the time to enjoy their last semester of high school while “looking forward to what is coming, as well.” Bill Longer extended his congratulations to the new Board members and Mr. Porras and was “looking forward to working” with them and rest of the Board. He commented that Dr. Buffington’s comments about Shirley Pope made him smile and noted she was not only the dispatcher for the Hobart Police Department but also for the Lake Station and New Chicago Police Departments, and she worked for the Hobart City Court. He mentioned that she had a pleasant personality and was always calm no matter the circumstances and said police officers appreciated her for that.

From the Board, Don Rogers welcomed Karen Robbins and the Keehn family. In addition, he indicated that the dedication of the wrestling room for Steve Balash “went off very, very well and the family was impressed.” He commented he had not had a chance to view the Channel 7 video clip about a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Chicago area that was being done in Steve Balash’s honor. Dr. Buffington noted it was very emotional but a very touching story. Mr. Balash was an outstanding person who dedicated 50 years of his life to students in Hobart. She appreciated the work that Pete Cortese, Hobart’s resident artist, did with the mural of Mr. Balash and noted that Alex Ramos framed it. She said “people loved Steve Balash,” and he left a legacy of service and “giving to other people.” Don Rogers appreciated that the mural and plaque were outside of the wrestling room. Brad Keehn extended his thanks to “everyone for the warm welcome” and noted he was looking forward to working with the Board and hoped to serve as well as those who served before him. Stu Schultz congratulated Brad Keehn and Frank Porras. He thanked Bill Longer for everything he does for the school district. Kayla Davis, HHS student representative, extended her congratulations to the Board for their recognition. She noted that Mr. Balash was her gym teacher, said he was joyful, and was there for the students. She had a great first semester. Isis Fleming hoped everyone enjoyed their holidays, and she was glad to be back. She said Mr. Balash was her gym teacher at the middle school and noted he was always kind. She mentioned Senior Night for the swimming and diving teams held recently, and she thanked the Board for their support of all of the sports programs. Frank Porras welcomed Mr. Keehn and his family. He congratulated the girls wrestling team for being second at their sectional and wished them luck at the regional. He offered his congratulations to his fellow officers. He mentioned that he had known Coach Balash for many years, and he was one of the reasons his family moved to Hobart 20 years ago. He agreed with Don Rogers on the placement of the plaque and the painting being on the outside of the room and said “the painting was awesome.” Sandi Hillan commented, “This is the beginning of a new era.” She noted this was “the meat and potatoes” time of the year where the staff work very hard, and she asked that the staff be thanked for all of the work they will be doing. She extended her congratulations to Brad Keehn and welcomed him to the Board, and she thanked Frank Porras on his return to the Board. She thanked Dr. Buffington for recognizing the Board. Rikki Guthrie wished everyone a Happy New Year. She congratulated Brad Keehn and was glad he was serving on the Board. She extended congratulations to Frank Porras on his return to the Board and accepting to serve as an officer. She thanked Sandi Hillan for moving to another office, and she thanked the Board for their confidence in her to serve as their President. She thanked Bill Longer for agreeing to serve with them for another year and noted her appreciation of his service. She wished the girls wrestling team good luck and knew they would do well tomorrow. She also

commented on the Senior Night for the swimming and diving teams and said it was enjoyable to watch them all perform in the pool. She said Hobart’s pool was “amazing” and noted that she has been to many of the pools in the area. Mrs. Guthrie said our swim program was fantastic, and she expressed her appreciation to the community for their support to build a new pool.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, President Guthrie adjourned the meeting around 7:52 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular session meeting is January 23, 2025.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By _____
Rikki A. Guthrie, President

ATTEST:

By _____
Frank Porras, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: January 23, 2025